

Strip Herbicide Application

Job Sheet

PURPOSE: Without disturbance, over time grassland fields often become dominated by dense sod or monotypic grassy vegetation, which reduces habitat quality for a number of wildlife species. The use of herbicides can improve plant diversity by reducing the vigor and abundance of dominant plants that compete and crowd out other desirable plants. Used properly, this is an excellent way to enhance grassland habitat for bobwhite quail and other wildlife. Strip herbicide application can enhance habitat quality by releasing important food and cover plants, resulting in an increased abundance and diversity of food and cover available to a wide range of wildlife species.



A dense grass field with chemically suppressed grass strip in center results in significant gains in plant structure and diversity.

SPECIFICATIONS:

Strips should be 25 to 75 feet wide. Strips should be separated from each other by an area of undisturbed vegetation twice as wide as the sprayed strip. Ideally, sprayed strips should be as long as possible and should follow the contour of the field to reduce erosion. The purpose of the spraying is not to completely eradicate vegetation, but reduce its vigor and abundance. To accomplish this, use herbicides at label rates to set back, but not eliminate vegetation. Spraying should be done when the vegetation you wish to retard is actively growing—for example, March 15—May 1 or October 1—December 1 for cool-season grasses; or in May and June for warm-season grasses. Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) spraying dates may differ. The sprayed areas will provide a wider array of plants, providing a greater abundance and diversity of seed and insects, which are important for many wildlife species.

One year later, spray a new strip of similar width in the adjacent unsprayed area. Spray the final undisturbed strip the third year. This develops adjacent strips of vegetation of three

different ages. Wildlife friendly legumes can be overseeded into the sprayed strips to enhance the benefits. In areas of heavy residue, light disking or prescribed burning may be necessary to optimize habitat conditions for some wildlife species.

This practice is used primarily to set back grasses, although it may also be used to improve habitat quality on fields dominated by perennial forbs, or broad-leaved plants. Ideally, one-third of the field will be treated each year. Re-treat sprayed areas as needed to maintain desired plant diversity. Be certain that the herbicide(s) selected will control the targeted plant(s). Follow all label directions.

MAINTENANCE:

- ☐ Exclude livestock from natural headquarters and plantings.
- ☐ Use herbicides to suppress invasive vegetation and to control noxious weeds.
- ☐ Use light disking or prescribed burning in areas with heavy ground litter.
- ☐ Retreat sprayed areas as needed to maintain desired plant diversity.

PRIMARY HABITAT CONSIDERATIONS:

- Provide natural cover sources for quail and other grassland wildlife.

Consult with NRCS or MDC wildlife biologists and private land conservationists, or University Extension for additional recommendations.

COMMENTS

Landowner: _____ Farm No. _____ Tract No. _____

Field No. _____

CONTACT:



Date: _____

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